

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR REDUCING THE CALCIUM AND
PHOSPHOROUS RATIO AND INCREASING CRUDE PROTEIN IN
SHELLFISH WASTE MEAL**

5 **CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This invention was originally disclosed in disclosure documents numbers 482942, and 490994 filed on, November 28, 2000 and March 26, 2001 respectively. The inventor claims all rights and priorities associated with those disclosure documents.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a method and apparatus for the processing of shellfish waste meal (SWM). More particularly, to increasing the crude protein while decreasing calcium and phosphorus levels of crawfish waste meal (CWM). The method significantly reduces the percent calcium and phosphorous in shellfish waste meal while lowering the ratio of calcium to phosphorous and raising or maintaining protein levels. These findings make the waste meal a more viable economical nitrogen source in for plants and protein source in livestock rations.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Proper disposal of aquatic waste is a growing environmental problem for the aquaculture industry in Louisiana and other coastal areas of the United States. Freshwater Crawfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) and the White River Crawfish (*Procambarus zonangulus*) are important commercial commodities in Louisiana. Louisiana produces over 90% of the crawfish harvested in the United States. The state's aquaculture industry has over 100 crawfish shrimp and crab processing plants. These plants bag or package the shellfish for sale in various forms. Of the amount of crawfish harvested

each year, approximately 85% (34 to 85 million pounds) is classified as crawfish waste. Analogously, of the crab, and shrimp harvested each year, approximately 60% to 70% is waste respectfully. The exploration of ways to utilize the waste makes good environmental and economical sense.

5 Shellfish waste is an abundant product emanating from the over 100 crawfish plants in South Louisiana. The reluctance of feed manufacturers to use concentrated amounts of crawfish and other shellfish waste has been due to the high calcium percentage in the meal. More particularly, *crawfish* waste meal can have an average of 13% to 22% calcium while having a calcium to phosphorous ratio of 18:1 or
10 higher. The percentage of calcium can vary due to the stage of growth of the shellfish and amount of shell in the waste.

The general accepted recommendation in the feed industry is to restrict crawfish or shellfish meal to 10% of the ration for monogastrics and ruminants. The percentage of calcium, phosphorous and the high ratio of calcium to phosphorous and its
15 inhibition of other nutrients are the primary reasons for the feed manufacturers to not seriously consider these meals in their feed rations.

Researchers have attempted to address the problem of commercial shellfish waste but have not found methods which are both economical and ecologically safe. As shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,153,251 issued to FuKuhara et al. discloses a nutrition-
20 enriched composition for animal feed.

U.S. Pat. No's. 6,042,464 and 6,102,790 issued to Cowsar et al. shows automated apparatus and method for extracting tail meat from crawfish.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,972,403 issued to Tiller discloses a method for removing salt and water from a fish meal production stream without sacrificing fish protein solids.

25 U.S. Pat. No. 1,941,001 issued to Braginsky et al. disclose apparatus for the removal and recovery of crustacean meat.

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The present invention overcomes the problem of high calcium concentrations and the high calcium to phosphorous ratios normally associated with shellfish waste meal and creates potentially a new revenue stream for the U.S. aquaculture industry.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention overcomes the problem of the high calcium and phosphorous counts in shell fish, while significantly reducing the shell fish waste disposal problem in Southern Louisiana. The method allows for the processing of ground shellfish meal
10 into fractionated shell and meal components. The meal component is further processed to a new meal that has a significant reduction in calcium and phosphorous, while maintaining or raising the crude protein in the new crawfish meal product.

Table 1 shows the comparison of unprocessed crawfish waste meal (control) relative to the Method. Table 1 shows that by using the Method, crude protein was
15 significantly increased beyond 50%, while calcium and phosphorous levels were significantly reduce. Conversely, the calcium to phosphorous ratio was also significantly reduced. A major difference in Methods 1, 2 and 3 were the strength of the reagent used in the solution brine. Crawfish waste from the multitude of crawfish plants in South Louisiana and other areas can be converted to crawfish meal and
20 further processed using the Method.

Table 2 shows a comparison of crude protein, calcium, and phosphorous for soybean meal, unprocessed crawfish and processed crawfish. The levels of crude protein are significantly increased for the processed crawfish meal with the calcium and phosphorous levels decreased.

25 It is an object of the invention to provide a method for increasing the crude protein in shellfish meal.

It is another object of the invention to provide a method to reduce the calcium to phosphorous ratios in shellfish meal.

Another object of the invention is to reduce the annual tonnage of shellfish waste in the United States.

An object of the invention is to provide method of generating a shellfish meal acceptable for use as a fertilizer.

5 It is another object of the invention to provide apparatus which allows the economical processing of shellfish meal.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description in which the preferred embodiments have been set forth in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In describing the preferred embodiments of the invention reference will be made to the series of figures and drawings briefly described below.

Figure 1 shows schematic of the process flow diagram.

15 Figure 2 continues the process flow diagram of the method.

Figure 3 shows the process using dried fish waste meal.

Figure 4 continues the process flow diagram of fig. 3.

Figure 5 shows the separator.

20 There may be additional structures described in the foregoing application which are not depicted on one of the described drawings. In the event such a structure is described but not depicted in a drawing, the absence of such a drawing should not be considered as an omission of such design from the specification.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In the following description, the present invention will be described in this embodiment as a process for producing shellfish meal. Those skilled in the art will

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readily recognize that the equivalent of such process and its applicability for all crustaceans.

Referring to figures 1 and 2 step 1 (100), dried material of SWM is introduced into the process flow. Step 2 (110), the SWM is loaded into a mechanical or electrical feed separator. Step 3 (120), the separator allows small pieces of SWM to fall into a collection pan. The separator has a mesh screen with 3/16 inch openings. The pieces of SWM that are larger than 3/16 inches are sent to a grinder (122) and returned to the separator. Step 4 (130), the pieces which are 3/16 inch or less are removed from the collection pan and placed into stainless steel container and mixed with a strong acid preferably hydrochloric acid (HCL). Step 5 (140), water is added. Step 6 (150), the ph is determined. If the ph is not less than 2.0 then water is added. Step 7 (160), the SWM mix is stirred and step 8 (170) allowed to settle for 4-8 hours. Step 9, (180) the liquid is drained and step 10 (190) the mix is filtered. Step 11 (200), the mix is rinsed with water and step 12 (210) the ph of the mix is determined. If the ph is not greater than 4.0 then more water is added (211). Step 13 (220) the water is drained from the mix. Finally, step 13 (230) the mix is dried and bagged for use.

In the preferred process of figures 3 and 4, dried crawfish waste meal (CWM) is used as dried material, and is introduced into the process flow (300). Step 2 (310), the CWM is loaded into a mechanical or electrical feed separator. Step 3 (320), the separator allows small pieces of CWM to fall into a collection pan. As shown in figure 5, the separator (366) has a mesh screen (361) with 3/16 inch openings (362). A center cylinder (363) is attached to a motor (364). The separator is electrical however manual operation is possible by placing a hand crank (not shown) on the center cylinder (353). In operation, as the separator (366) is turned, the pieces of CWM that are smaller than 3/16 inches are dropped to the bottom catch pan (365). The larger pieces are sent to a grinder (322) and returned to the separator (366). Step 4 (330), the pieces which are 3/16 inch or less are removed from the collection pan and placed into stainless steel container and mixed with hydrochloric acid (HCL).

Step 5 (340), water is added. The ratio of HCL to water should be in the 288 milliliters of HCL for every 1000 milliliters of water. Either tap water or deionized water is sufficient for this purpose. The liquid solution should be at least ½ to ¾ inch above the CWM. Step 6 (350), the ph is determined. If the ph is not less than 5 2.0 then more water is added to lower the ph. A ph of about 1.1 is desirable. Step 7 (360), the CWM mix is stirred and step 8 (370) allowed to settle for 4-8 hours. Step 9, (380) the liquid is drained using a screen mesh catch basin having a mesh size of .085 and .142. Step 10 (390) the mix is filtered. Step 11 (400), the mix is rinsed with water and step 12 (410), the ph of the mix is determined. If the ph is not greater 10 than 4.0 then more water is added (411). Step 13 (420) the water is drained from the mix. Finally, step 13 (430) the mix is dried and bagged for use.

Further modification and variation can be made to the disclosed embodiments without departing from the subject and spirit of the invention as defined in the following claims. Such modifications and variations, as included within the scope of 15 these claims, are meant to be considered part of the invention as described